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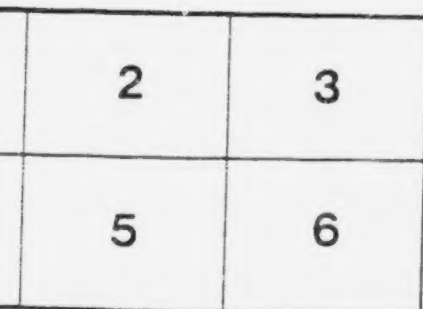
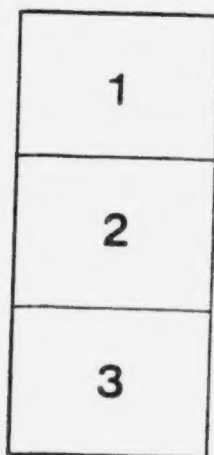
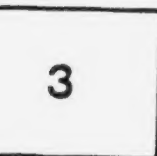
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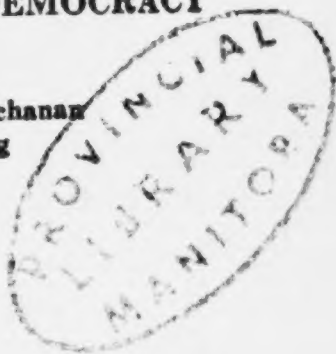


# **Toward Democracy**

**Or the Revival of  
an Old Idea**

**DIRECT LEGISLATION THE  
NEXT STEP IN DEMOCRACY**

**By D. W. Buchanan  
Winnipeg**



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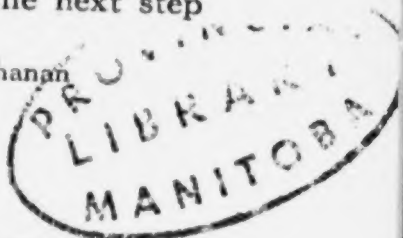
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## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER I.—BEGINNING OF GOVERNMENT

Land the Chief Factor  
Ancient Civilizations  
Privilege the Destroyer  
The Menace of the World Today

### CHAPTER II.—THE STRUGGLE FOR BRITISH LIBERTY

Common People Demonstrate their Worth  
Every Step toward Democracy a Gain to All  
The Lion in the Way of Progress

### CHAPTER III.—PRIVILEGE AND POLITICS

How to Get Rich  
Monopoly in Canada  
The Great Iniquity  
The New Awakening

### CHAPTER IV.—THE OLD-NEW WAY

Direct Legislation  
Theory vs. Practice  
No Recourse short of Rebellion  
It is Coming

## CHAPTER I.

### Beginning of Government

Primitive man in the rudest stage of human existence, lived the solitary, individual life, without government of any form. He roamed about through forest and fen in search of food, defending himself from the wild animals, or from his equally savage brother man with such weapons as nature afforded him—the stick and the stone. This is not a fanciful picture. In the natives of Australia, we have in modern times an example of man, in a rude stage of existence, living without any form of government.

As the centuries rolled by the people began to come together in communities. This gathering together we may say was the beginning of civilization. When this took place the need of government of some kind was felt. Thus we have the development of the communal or tribal systems of government. Under the tribal form of government we can imagine the people met together and passed such laws as they thought necessary for the well-being of the community. In modern times we have had examples of such primitive systems of government among various aboriginal peoples. Chiefs or head men were appointed to see to the carrying out of the laws. This was in effect pure democracy. This was rule by the people. It had this advantage over our modern system, namely; that the people had exactly such laws as they wanted, and they did not have any laws that they did not want.

Under our representative system of government, we frequently have to take such laws as the politicians or political bosses decide among themselves to give us, and they not infrequently give us laws that we do not want, and refuse to give us laws that we do want. It has frequently required years and years of agitation, carried to the very point of rebellion, to force elective representatives to give the people some law or measure which they have demanded. To this extent the primitive tribal system was superior to our representative system. The people had the immediate possibility of securing exactly what they wanted. Under our modern representative system the people have no way of securing their desires short of using illegal force—that is, rebellion. In theory the people have recourse, but in actual practice there are occasions where the people cannot secure the observance of their wishes short of resorting to illegal acts.

Later, as tribal rule was extended over larger areas of territory, and the number of people had increased, it became impractical for all the people to meet together to pass the laws. Recourse was then had to the delegate or representative system. Men distinguished for their wisdom and ability were selected by the people to carry out the desires of the community. In the early ages, we can imagine, government by representatives soon became a struggle between the people and the representatives. The representatives or chief men sought to increase their own power over the people, while the people struggled to maintain their liberty. There

are in nature two great forces—the positive and the negative—and so we have in our political and social life two forces, the positive or progressive element, and the negative or reactionary element; the positive element working toward liberty and higher civilization—working for the uplift of the people; the negative element, reactionary and despotic, working for the establishment of class rule—for the establishment of a ruling aristocracy that shall control the great mass of the common people. This negative element would establish a ruling class and a ruled class.

### **Land the Chief Factor**

The delegates or chief men, in time began to consider themselves superior to the people whom they had been appointed to serve. They endeavored to make themselves masters of the people, rather than their servants. And so it came about that in course of time a governing class or aristocracy was established. The tribal chief or head man, who had no power of his own under the earlier form of government, when the people met to make the laws, gradually became a powerful factor in the situation, and eventually became a king or despotic ruler. The land, which had been the property of the tribe or all the people in common, was eventually seized by the ruling class who claimed it as their private property. Once the land passed out of the control of the people and became the private property of the privileged few, the soul of liberty was lost. Henceforth the common people were the



virtual slaves of the ruling class. Land has been the chief factor of civilization in every age of the world. Those who have successfully maintained a claim to the ownership of the land, have been able to dominate the life of the nation, and retain vast privileges, even in the most highly civilized states, to the general detriment of the common people. Thus a condition has been established which makes real democracy impossible.

We have an actual demonstration of this usurpation of the ownership of land at a comparatively recent date in Scotland and in Russia, and even in England, in the enclosure of the commons, which latter acts had the effect of divorcing the workers from the soil. In the Scottish highlands tribal ownership of the land was recognized to a comparatively late date. After Culloden, with the waning of the power of the Highland clans, and the breaking up of the old order of things, the lands were in many cases granted in fee simple to the chiefs, by the central government. When this occurred the common people were without rights in their own land. The Highlanders became a homeless race in their native glens. The depopulation of the Highlands that followed is one of the most pitiable chapters in British history.

The history of landlordism in Britain is the history of the degradation and enslavement of a great people. What measure of freedom Britain has accomplished has been in spite of landlordism. It has represented the power behind which oppression and conservatism has been entrenched. It has been



the chief force against which the common people have had to continually struggle, on various occasions to the verge of war, in order to win one by one the liberties which we enjoy to-day. It is still the chief force against which every progressive movement must struggle in the continuous contest between equal opportunity and special privilege. Across the road to liberty, equality and higher civilization, landlordism is continually erecting barriers. When, if ever, we reach a perfect condition of civilization, the landlord will have been eliminated.

### Ancient Civilizations

From the dawn of history to the present day the struggle for liberty and equality has been going on, with many ups and downs. With retrograde as well as forward movements. At times, even in remote ages, the star of liberty appeared in the ascendancy, and immediately civilization blazed up, only to be quenched again by reactionary despotism. Many people vainly imagine that liberty, or such liberty as we enjoy to-day, is entirely a thing of modern growth. But we must go back to an age four or five centuries before the time of Christ, to find the greatest example of democratic government in the written or known history of the world. That wonderful period in ancient Greek history known as the Age of Pericles furnishes us with the model democracy of all known time. The democracy of Athens represents an age of attainments, of civilization, of culture, which has been the wonder and admiration of all schol-

ars to the present day. In the democracy of Athens the people were supreme. Illiteracy was unknown. Where in the world today in English speaking countries, will we find a large community where there is not a percentage, usually considerable, of illiteracy? In Athens it is said every citizen was capable of serving the state in a high and honorable capacity. The historian Freeman rates the average intelligence of the citizens of Athens as equal to that of the British House of Commons—the greatest political body in the civilized world at the present day. Under this democracy learning flourished in every department. In a given period, it is claimed, Athens produced more great men who have left their mark on the pages of history—statesmen, artists, philosophers, historians, etc., than all the world has produced in a like period, at any time in its history. The great Greek poets, historians, orators, architects, sculptors, etc., are still the models of inspiration for our greatest men down to the present day. Our grandest temples are copies, often inferior, of Greek architecture. Our most costly mansions are embellished with copies of Greek art. In literature and art we have not surpassed the product of Greek liberty—of Grecian democracy.

### **Elevating Feature of Democracy**

When we delegate government to a small band of politicians, we deliberately throw away the most highly civilizing and uplifting influence which we have in connection with the affairs of state. It was the share which every

Greek citizen had in the affairs of state which produced such a high order of intelligence and such a wonderful condition of civilization. Every citizen felt that he was a part of the government. Under such conditions, to have been ignorant of state affairs would have been considered a disgrace. The entire fabric of public sentiment was uplifted and refined by this feeling that the people were the state—were the government. Hence we have a period of intellectual uplift which stands unique and alone in the known history of the world. Compare this with the lax idea of political morality in Canada. Men who would be strictly honest in a private transaction or in any ordinary business matter, will not shrink from taking any advantage in their power when the transaction is with a government, municipal, provincial or federal. From the worker who toils for a few dollars per day, to the merchant who supplies goods in large quantity, the feeling prevails that it is a pardonable offence, at least, to take advantage of the government. The worker thinks it quite right to waste his time, and the merchant will take trade advantages which he would not think of in private transactions. If the people were the government (which in a sense they ought to be), this despicable condition could not survive. It is because the people have not a sufficient part in the affairs of state that there is such a woeful lack of information on public matters among Canadians. It is because we have delegated too much power to our politicians, that the people do not feel a personal interest in the

government of the country. It is because we have men in public life who are themselves dishonest in the transaction of public business, that causes this lax sentiment of dishonesty in dealings with the government. It is because official business is transacted in a loose and often slovenly way, that private citizens who do business with the government, think it immaterial if they follow on in somewhat the same line.

But with all her liberty and all her learning, Athenian civilization did not endure. Athenian civilization was based on chattel slavery. Where there is privilege there can be neither true liberty nor equality. A true and lasting civilization can be based only on complete equality of opportunity. The Athenian democracy reached a condition of equality such as has scarcely been attained elsewhere in all history, but it was an equality among freemen only. True liberty does not permit of slavery or special privilege in any form. Liberty, justice, equality, the three grandest words in our language, can never be attained while any form of slavery or a vestige of privilege remains.

### **Privilege the Great Destroyer**

Liberty reached a condition among the freemen of the Athenian democracy in advance almost of anything we have at the present day. Literature and art were carried to the utmost perfection of human genius. But the canker of privilege was more potent to destroy than these things were to build up. The same

canker of privilege led to the downfall of the great Roman empire, so sapping her strength that she became an easy prey to the barbarian hordes. Rome was not overthrown by Vandals, Goths nor Huns. Only a shell was left, which the rude men from the north had little difficulty in crushing. The Roman empire went to pieces from within, because of privilege. Almost every important source of wealth was monopolized by the privileged class. On the one hand was monopoly, privilege, wealth, luxury, vulgar display and all the vice that privilege and wealth could engender. On the other the great mass of the proletariat or common people, steeped in poverty and eking out a wretched existence on a basis of charity—with the assistance of the state distribution of corn. These were not such conditions as could ensure permanency. The displacement of the free cultivators of the soil sealed the doom of Rome. When the lands of Italy finally passed into the hands of a limited number of persons representing the privileged class, and the independent farmers were driven into the cities, there to swell the ranks of the debased proletariat, the end was in sight. The small holdings of the free farmers were now amalgamated into great estates which were worked by slaves. The free cultivators of the soil, who bred the men that filled the Roman legions with sturdy warriors, and gave to the nation many of her ablest men, were driven out by the greed of the privileged class, while the latter, through the monopoly of all sources of wealth, were enabled to waste tremendous sums in luxury and

riotous living. Under such conditions how could the nation endure?

The farm produces more than wheat and oats and butter and meat. It produces men. Many of our best men in all walks of life, come from the farms. In our cities we find many of the best positions filled with men bred on the farms. It is claimed by students of sociology that the cities would become extinct if they were not continually renewed by the movement from the country. When Rome lost her free agricultural class she lost the great regenerating force without which the nation must steadily decline. Modern sanitary knowledge has made it possible to greatly improve conditions in the city, but economic conditions and a vicious system of taxation, which encourage slums, overcrowding and poverty, render it impossible to take full advantage of sanitary science.

### The Menace of the World

The menace of the world today is still privilege. We have a tremendous modern development of privilege, which has led to the concentration of almost unimaginable wealth in a few hands, while the common people are able only through strict economy to live decently, and many thousands have to be assisted by charity. We have on this continent a commercial despotism that has enslaved the common people almost as completely as the chattel slavery of Greece, and that is almost as debasing and destructive in its worst forms as the rule of privilege and wealth in ancient Rome. It has been stated that in

who controls the wealth of the nation is master of the people. The feature of the present age is the wonderful concentration of wealth in a few hands. This concentration of wealth has gone on more rapidly during the past ten years than during the fifty years previously. Fortunes that would have been incomprehensible fifty years ago, have been piled up within the last decade or two. What would have been considered immense fortunes within the memory of men now living, are now merely trifling aggregations of wealth. It is said that not more than a dozen men having their offices in Wall Street, New York, control some \$35,000,000,000 (not millions but billions) of the corporate wealth of the United States. In the same city 300,000 working women are constantly on the verge of starvation. This immense sum controlled by this little bunch of capitalists, is about 80 per cent. of the total corporate capitalization of the nation, represented by railways, banks, loan companies, insurance and trust companies, the great industrial and commercial concerns and public utilities corporations. These vast interests are allied and interwoven together, to such an extent that they may be depended upon to stand together for the maintenance and extension of all the privileges which have operated in the past to make it possible to bring about this tremendous concentration of capital. The menace of wealth in its most dangerous form is the political influence which it may wield. The power of this vast concentration of wealth, which has been made possible through the existence of privilege in various



forms, is used to dominate our political institutions and thereby virtually enslave the people.

In Aesop's fables we read about a simple-minded man who found a snake which was on the point of perishing from cold and hunger. He took it to his home and warmed and fed it and nursed it back to health and strength. True to that instinct which is supposed to attach to the snake family, the serpent repaid his kindness by making a vicious attack upon his family, the first opportunity it had. The simple-minded people of Canada have warmed and nursed and fed a whole family of serpents, of the natural order greed, of the genus privilege. Now that these serpents have attained to great strength and power, they repay the people by endeavoring to dominate our political institutions, thereby virtually enslaving the people. Shall we, like the simple man of the fable, act promptly and beat them to death on the spot, or shall we continue to tax ourselves in order that they may continue to wax more wealthy and more powerful?

The recent great political contest in the neighboring Republic (the presidential election of November, 1912), has been described by Hon. J. W. Westcott as "the eternal conflict between equal opportunity and special privilege." There cannot be true liberty where there is not equal opportunity. There cannot be equal opportunity where there is one vestige of privilege. We English-speaking people of America, whether of Canada or the Republic, should cease our boastings of liberty while

privilege is upheld by the laws of the land. Liberty and privilege are irreconcilable foes. One or the other must eventually be destroyed. They cannot dwell together ad inuicem. I believe that liberty will eventually triumph on this continent; not that the fate of ancient Greece and Rome awaits us, as some writers have prophesied.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Struggle for British Liberty

With the spread of education and the more general dissemination of knowledge among the masses the people are demanding a freer hand and closer control in the government of the country. On the other hand we still have the reactionary element who persist in the claim that the people are not competent to judge for themselves, and that to give them a larger measure of control would be a serious menace to our political institutions. We still have men among us posing as statesmen, who boldly declare their belief in "an autocratic form of government as the best in the world, if you have the right kind of an autocrat." We still have leaders in our political life who are bitterly hostile to progressive political thought, and who declare publicly that these progressive movements will undermine the British constitution and destroy British liberty. Such narrow politicians entirely overlook the fact that British liberty as we have it to-day is the result of centuries of evolution, during which time it has undergone continuous change through the pressure of progressive thought. It is a result of this continuous pressure from progressive thought that we have such liberties as we enjoy today. All reforms of the past have been opposed on the same ground, namely, that they were subversive of our political institutions, but nevertheless these reforms have tended to build up rather than destroy, and as a result we

have our British constitution and British liberty as it stands today, not like the laws of the Medes and Persians which could not be changed, but a steady growth toward civilization, advancing as the people have advanced in knowledge and culture. Time will brush these obstructionists out of the way as their predecessors have been displaced before them. The classes have steadily opposed the extension of freedom and justice to the common people, and have predicted ruin to our political institutions as a result of proposed reforms, but invariably such extensions have brought improvement, better government and general advancement. The history of the British nation proves this beyond any shadow or doubt.

### **A Great Step Toward Democracy**

It required years of agitation and a tremendous struggle to secure the passage of the great reform bill of 1832. Previous to the passage of that bill the British franchise was extremely limited, and confined practically to the landlords. In all of Scotland there were only about 3,000 people entitled to vote, and about 150,000 in England and Wales. The landlords opposed every effort at reform and predicted ruin to the nation as a result, but the agitation finally became so violent that they were forced to yield to the demand for the abolition of the pocket boroughs, usually owned by the Lords, and to an extension of the franchise. Though the new franchise of 1832 was not nearly as liberal as we have it today, the effect of the admission of a large num-

ber of the middle-class to a voice in public affairs was magical. The reform was followed by a period characterized by progressive legislation such as has scarcely a parallel in British history. The common people were equal to the occasion, and events abundantly demonstrated the wisdom of admitting them to a share in the government of the country. Instead of the ruin predicted by the ruling aristocracy, there was a veritable bound forward in splendid legislation for the uplift of humanity—legislation which to the present day reflects to the glory of the British nation and established our claim to be the foremost people of the world in liberty and civilization. Among the reform measures which resulted from the victory of the people over the Lords in 1832, we may mention the abolition of chattel slavery, an act for the limitation and protection of child labor in factories, and the reform of the poor laws. I cannot dwell to discuss these reforms. A nation cannot be free where slavery exists. The condition in British factories at this time was awful. Children of tender years—mere babes, were obliged to toil long hours, in filthy, unhealthy and often vicious surroundings. The poor law was an abomination. The aristocratic rulers cared nothing about these matters. Only the common people could be trusted to right such wrongs.

Lastly, as a result of the passage of the reform bill we may mention the repeal of the iniquitous corn laws. This did not come until some years later, but it was a direct result of the reform bill, and could never have been secured without it. As it was, the corn laws

were only a means to an end, and the greatest strain in the history of British parliamentary history, caused by strenuous and violent opposition from the landed class, who were the chief beneficiaries of the corn laws, and not the means to some supposed greater end, but to the last ditch but very determined to yield. The corn laws represented a violent principle of class legislation, in the interest of the aristocracy. The great landed class were the beneficiaries. Talk about vested rights of property. The history of landlordism is the history of the wrongs done wrong in the annals of the British nation. Civil law for centuries has been built up on the foundation of the sacred rights of property. This applies to British civil law, and also to the legal system of India built up by the British. The rich privileged class of the British empire upon which modern law is largely based. In this second decade of the 20th century, it is time we began to consider the sacredness of human rights. The theory of the divine right of kings has passed away, but its unholy brother, the right of property, still lingers with us, and permeates the spirit of our law to the suppression of the rights of humanity.

### The Lion in the Way of Progress

The British landlord did not used to pray—Give us this day our daily bread, for he had his whole estates upon a considerable portion of his tenant's bread. Very often the major portion. Neither need he consider the saying—By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat

thy bread. Has he not lived and flourished by the sweat of his neighbor's face? Has he not revelled in luxury at the expense of the working people, since William the Conqueror parcelled the land of Britain among his chief men and Henry VIII. seized the estates of the church and distributed the land among his sycophantic favorites? The landlord is but a type of the whole crew of privileged pensioners living at the expense of the common people.

The struggle of the people for liberty has been going on all through the ages from the dawn of history down to the present day, and still we have much to accomplish. Magna Charta in Britain, the so-called religious wars in Germany, which were really struggles for liberty, civil and religious, and the French revolution, were great landmarks in this warfare. The positive element, fighting for advancement, and the negative or reactionary force, working to uphold class domination, are still the great factors in the situation. Governments grow reactionary with age, and the progressives have to be ever watchful and aggressive in order to hold their own or make further advance in civilization and uphold the interests of the common people. The establishment of erroneous economic conditions, which have operated in building up a wealthy, privileged class, has been the great drawback to social and political advancement on this continent. The seizure of the land, resulting in the monopolizing of the natural resources in the hands of a comparatively small privileged class, and thus building up an aristocracy of wealth and privilege, has



been the great hindrance in the old world to progressive government in the interest of all the people. In our own day we have wealthy privileged interests of various kinds which are continually working for self-aggrandisement, at the expense of the masses. Our party system has been worked and controlled to divide the people against their own interests and in the interest of the privileged few. In our own day the curse of partizanship has done more than perhaps any other cause to keep the people out of their rights. There are still a great percentage of the voters who are unable to see any farther than the end of their political nose. The people have divided into two great camps along party lines, often led by politicians whose main ambition seems to be to get and retain power. The party in opposition is usually liberal in promises of great reform measures in the interest of the people, but when returned to power, after some show of carrying out promises, soon seems to get wearied in well doing, and drops under the influence of the wealthy privileged class. Thus often the hope for reform which is aroused by a change of government, soon ends in disappointment.

### **Heads I Win, Tails You Lose**

The situation in this country resulting from the division of the people into two political camps reminds one strongly of an old print called The Law Suit. Two farmers are represented as having quarreled over the ownership of a cow, and they resort to law to establish their respective claims. One farmer has seiz-

ed the cow by the horns, while the other has gripped the caudal appendage. Thus while the farmers strive over their respective claims, a lawyer on either side representing each of the combatants, quietly appropriates the milk. By the time the suit is finished the cow will belong to the lawyers. Thus it is with our people who blindly and unthinkingly follow the party band wagon. While the people divide up on party lines, the privileged interests, which seem to get along so lovingly with whichever political machine may be in power for the time, are able to dominate the situation to their own advantage. While the people waste their strength in contending for political control of the cow Canada, the interests quietly dominate both parties and appropriate the milk.

It has been necessary to take some time to show that the development of liberty as we have it today has been a result of progressive movements among the common people. These movements have always been opposed at the outset by the ruling class and results have only been attained after years of agitation, on some occasions carried almost to the point of rebellion. No great reform has ever come from the aristocracy. Inch by inch as it were the people have had to wrench their rights from the dominant class. Even in our own day we have a class who hold that representative government means rule by the representatives—not rule by the people through their representatives. They take the view that the representatives are not appointed to do the will of the people, but to carry out their own

will and rule the people. In effect they say the people are not competent to judge what is necessary and good for the government of the country, and hence representatives are selected to do this. This is the old idea that has been fought all the way through in the struggle of the common people for their rights. It is the principle which all down through the ages has opposed itself to the advancement of the people toward democracy. This is the condition that exists in Canada at the present day, and it is not to be wondered at, because we have treated our representatives as though they were our masters and not our servants. Those who oppose the reform which we call Direct Legislation are opposed to rule by the people. They believe that the people should be ruled by their elected representatives, rather than that the people should govern through these representatives. Our governments, federal and provincial, are conducted along the lines of the supremacy of the representatives rather than of the people. At election time the politicians talk very condescendingly of the supremacy of the people. They tell the people they are the real sovereign rulers of the country, and much other similar clap-trap, but the moment the elections are over the successful candidate becomes an autocrat, or a cog in the wheel of an autocratic machine. Once the election is over, the people have no control over their representatives until the end of their term of office and another election comes around. They are entirely at the mercy of the elected representatives. Only by armed or forcible rebellion can we interfere.

no matter how shamefully our representatives may betray us. We can discharge our representatives at the end of their five years' term, but as we must instal their successors on the same oligarchic terms we cannot hope for much improvement from the change. Thus we go on installing one set of men after another, in vain hoping for better results, until some good people get disgusted and declare they will have nothing more to do with politics. And all the while we have never stopped to consider that it is our system that is wrong. If we would really look closely into the matter we would see that we are only getting just such results as we might reasonably expect from the system. Apply the same system to any large business enterprise that we apply to our system of government, and bad management, speculation and failure would surely result. Why, then, should we expect different results from a bad system in politics?

## CHAPTER III.

### Privilege and Politics

There is a childish notion abroad in the land that the attainment of wealth is the result of industry, perseverance, thrift. No such thing. Great wealth has been attained largely as the result of the possession of a privilege of some kind, which has enabled the possessor to accumulate and live luxuriously at the expense of his fellow man. Is it not the rich who are idle, indolent, wasteful? The poor who are industrious, laborious and frugal? Who are the workers of the world? The poor. Who are the wealth-producers of the world? Again, paradoxical as it may seem, we are compelled to answer, the poor. Why are the wealth producers poor? Because they are only permitted to retain sufficient of the wealth which they produce to enable them to live and propagate the race. The balance goes to the parasites of privilege who have fastened themselves on the backs of the workers. Production is limited to a certain amount. Statistics as to the distribution of wealth vary much. It is variously estimated that one-tenth to one-twentieth of the people of the United States secure two-thirds of the annual production. This means that while a few get millions more than they need or can use, the remaining nineteen-twentieths get a bare living. The few cannot get enormously more than their share without robbing others of a large portion of what they have earned. It is said that the average annual income of the workmen of the United States per

family is about \$300. But on the other hand there are some wealthy men who get this much per hour. Some are reputed to have an income of \$1 per second, or \$60 per minute. But it is all perfectly legal and in accordance with our social and economic life, which says that one individual is entitled to the wealth produced by another, and is authorized by law to take it by force, that is, by taxation levied upon the people for the benefit of the few.

### Farmers Great Producers of Wealth

The farmers are the greatest producers of wealth in this country, but who ever became a millionaire through working a farm? If there are any farmers who have become millionaires through the cultivation of their lands, they are not known to the writer. But many of the men who are engaged in hauling the farmer's produce to market are millionaires and multi-millionaires. They are the holders of tremendous privileges, as owners of the franchises which have been bestowed upon them by the people. These franchises are not only of enormous value in themselves, but they practically bestow upon the holders the privilege of levying a tax upon the people. In Canada we have not only bestowed these enormously valuable franchises upon private individuals, but we have bonused them to the extent of hundreds of millions along with the franchises. The average farmer, while a great producer of wealth, is able to retain very little, if anything, more of his earnings than the average wage worker. The railway corporations, the express

companies, the protected manufacturers, the privileged money lenders and the other interests all have a grab at his earnings, with the result that while the farmer has by all odds the expensive end of the cost of production, he is not allowed to retain an amount equal to half the cost to the consumer of the articles which he produces. And out of this portion he is compelled to pay a heavy tax to privileged interests, in addition to all legitimate costs of production.

It is all largely a matter of education—of training. If we could ask one of those old Grecian philosophers what he thought about chattel slavery, he would have opened his eyes in amazement. He had never for a moment questioned the propriety of chattel slavery. It was the very base of his civilization. He would have said that civilization could not exist without slavery. But we have now come to abhor the very idea of that form of slavery, though we uphold other forms possibly not very much better. We uphold the right of property. It is drilled into us from the cradle to the grave. We have a stupendous legal system which seems to be maintained mainly to teach the sacredness of property. But the time will come when we will regard the right of property, where it interferes with human rights, very much as we now regard the former belief in the divine right of kings. Even the people who suffered as a result of the theory of the divine right of kings, were at one time impressed with the belief. When we become properly educated as to the rights of property, the people will not hesitate



to take what they have earned, and consider they are doing quite the proper thing in so acting. The community will consider it perfectly proper to take back from others that which they have not earned, and apply it for the general good.

It is not the millionaires nor the multi-millionaires we are after. We have no quarrel with members of the capitalistic class. They are only a symptom of a condition. Almost any of us would secure great wealth in the same way if we had the opportunity to make use of the same means of securing it. The rich, like the poor, are simply the natural result of existing social and economic conditions. We cannot have any personal animosity against the rich any more than we can have against the poor. We spend enormous sums in charitable and criminal work, without giving the cause thereof much thought. Much of the poverty, misery and crime, like the millionaires, are simply the symptoms of a condition. The application of a common remedy would remove these extreme symptoms, because they both arise from a common cause.

### **Getting Rich Quick**

There never was a time in the history of Canada more fraught with important features than has been the case during the past few years. One by one the great industries and interests have been drawn together and amalgamated in trusts and combines, thus centralizing enormous capitalization in the hands of a few persons. Undoubtedly enormous over-capitalization and the injection of

tremendous quantities of water, has been a feature in most of these trust formations. Vast sums of money have gone into private pockets as a result of the flotation of these trusts, through over-capitalization, watered stocks and divisions of proceeds of stock sales among the promoters. This business of promoting has been one of the fruitful get-rich-quick expedients of modern commercial conditions. Many millionaires have been produced from these questionable operations, who have done nothing to earn the values which they have been enabled to absorb. The people of Canada—the consumers of the country in the end are obliged to pay the piper for all this. It has to be made up in some way, because when people absorb wealth which they have not earned, it is certain that it has been taken from others who have earned it. All wealth is the product of labor applied to the forces of nature, and the making of millionaires means that a few have been able to absorb wealth which has been created by the great mass of the people as a whole. Thus the vast fortunes which have been drawn from these commercial operations in our country during recent years simply mean that the people have been robbed to build up these private fortunes. The key to the situation is found in the word privilege—privilege which enables certain favored interests to impose a tax upon the people for their own private purposes.

### Monopolizing Industry

Figures compiled by J. J. Harpell, indicate to what extent this concentra-

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tion of business and capital has been going on in this country in recent years. Census figures give a list of 75,964 factories in Canada in 1891, while in 1905, or 15 years later, the census shows but 15,796 factories. Thus, in this period, though population had largely increased the number of factories had decreased enormously. The number of workmen employed also showed a decrease during the same period, due to improved machinery and centralizing of the work. Since the years named, this centralizing tendency has continued on a larger scale than ever. The smaller factories were first combined, forming large joint-stock corporations, and these in turn have been formed into great trusts. Vaster aggregations than ever before have been formed in the last three or four years. Our financial institutions are so closely bound up with these great industrial and commercial aggregations, that they may be considered as part and parcel of them.

Does it not prove that there is something fundamentally wrong in our economic conditions, which enable the few, who toil not, to amass vast fortunes and live in luxury, while the great mass of the people, whose industrious labor produces all this wealth, get but a scant livelihood? This rule of wealth and privilege must be displaced in favor of rule by the people.

These vast interests have no politics save what will serve their own personal ends. So long as the people divide up on party lines, and continue to uphold a political system over which they have no adequate control, so long will the monied interests be able to hold the

balance of power. So long will they be able to turn our political institutions in their own interest. That corporations have no souls is an old saying. Neither have they patriotism, we may add, in spite of vigorous flag-waving on effective occasion, when it is desirable to turn the attention of the people from the real points at issue. The greatest need of Canada today is knowledge of economic truth. Extreme partizanship is the main factor in the way of the spreading of the knowledge of truth and the enlightenment of the people.

The pleasing aspect of this somewhat unpleasant picture is the knowledge that the people can change all this if they so desire. The people have it in their power to rule. What is required is the spread of knowledge among the people, combined with fearless, independent leadership. The situation is full of hope. There has been a tremendous awakening in the United States during the past few years, which is one of the most hopeful signs of the times. Also in the mother country there have been very encouraging indications of progress, though there the situation is quite different from what it is on this continent. Canada at the moment is, politically and socially, the least progressive of any important English speaking nation. We are so engrossed with the great apparent prosperity that has been literally forced upon us, through the influx of population and capital, consequent to the development of a new country, that we have neglected the political and social side of our public life. We have been so completely absorbed in seizing upon and

appropriating our vast public domain to private use, that we have neglected to give reasonable attention to economic problems of national importance. We have overlooked the dangers of the tremendous growth of privilege and the development of the rule of wealth in our political life, with the attendant taxation which has been imposed upon the people for the benefit of private individuals and corporations. There have not been wanting evidences which indicate that the allied capitalistic corporations possess vastly more political power and more influence over our rulers than all the people. At any rate so long as the people divide up on party lines, it is a comparatively easy matter for the privileged interests to hold the balance of power between the parties and thus control the situation to their own advantage, as against the interests of the people.

Much of our apparent prosperity is undoubtedly due to the enormous borrowings of capital from abroad, for municipal, provincial and federal government expenditures; also borrowings by corporations for railway construction and other purposes. While there may not come a day of reckoning for this tremendous borrowing, there is no doubt but that it has had a tremendous influence in inflating land values and creating a condition of apparent prosperity. The great increase in land values has in turn vastly increased the nominal wealth of the farmers of our Western Provinces, and has further enabled them to borrow large sums upon the security of their land. How far this is a desirable situation we leave to the

judgment of the reader. It has not only encouraged increased borrowing on the part of the farmers, but has also induced many to sell out and take their profit in the land. The farmer who wishes to sell out and leave the country, will be able to get a great deal more money for his land, but those who desire to remain and work the land, will not find it any more productive because it is valued at many more dollars per acre than it was some years ago.

### **The Great Iniquity**

The policy which has characterized the handling of the public domain in Canada may be justly described as the great iniquity. We had the example of the United States to profit by, but we did not learn wisdom therefrom. The policy which seems to have actuated our rulers has been to get rid of the domain as quickly as possible. It has been handed over to the speculators in huge blocks for merely nominal prices. It has been parcelled out among political favorites in a most scandalous manner. It has been donated in tremendous quantity to railway and other corporations for the alleged purpose of assisting in the carrying out of various development works. For all this sacrifice of our vast public domain the people of Canada have had very little return, while on the other hand there has been tremendous loss. The people will have to bear an annual tax as a result of this waste. Enormous values donated to private individuals and corporations for carrying out development work such as railway construction, have gone into

private pockets. Our agricultural lands, our mineral lands, our forests, our water powers, etc., have been largely dissipated. Thousands of farms all over this western country will have their noses kept down on the grindstone for many years in their endeavors to pay interest to foreign speculators. Many of them will never be able to pay for the high priced lands which they have purchased from these speculators. In the meantime they are practically working for the speculators. While the few farmers who came early and got hold of choice locations before the great advance in land values, may consider themselves extremely fortunate, it is a different story for those who come later, who will be compelled to pay big prices to the speculator for the land. Free land sounds very good in immigration literature, but desirable homestead land is already becoming a scarce commodity, and can only be secured by going to remote parts of the country, at great cost and much privation, while millions of acres of land convenient to settlement are held out of use as a result of a system which encourages land speculation and robs the community of the values which it has created.

When one considers the awful waste that has characterized our handling of the public domain, and then thinks of what might have been accomplished by a sane and wise policy, it is something to cause a feeling of sadness. It is true we have manufactured many millionaires and multi-millionaires, by our gifts of the public domain, or by the reckless way in which it has been disposed of, but what about the people? The toilers



of the nation, the real producers of wealth have had to suffer. Land speculation has been the principal cause which has led to the scattering of population in our Western Provinces over such a vast area of country, thereby enormously increasing the cost of developing the country, while at the same time greatly increasing the hardships and privations of the settlers. By a sane land policy, which would have prevented speculation and retained the land in the hands of the government, a tremendous saving could have been secured. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent in unnecessary railway construction and other development work, or have been spent years and years before it would otherwise have been necessary. The entire agricultural population of the three Prairie Provinces, now scattered over such a vast territory, could have been concentrated in a fraction of the area now occupied. Settlement could have been consolidated as it proceeded. The saving in transportation alone, by a policy of this kind, would be beyond computation. Such a land policy, in connection with government ownership of railways, would have obviated all the hardships incidental to the development of a new country, and provided for a future state which would have been glorious to contemplate. As it is, we are obliged to build railways into remote regions to open up free lands, while settlers who locate in the developed or partially developed sections are obliged to buy high priced land from speculators who have done nothing to add to the wealth of the community. Would it not be wise to dis-

continue all effort toward inducing immigration and devote greater attention to the welfare of the population we now have, and thus cease to aggravate the evil of land speculation?

### **The New Awakening**

The people of the neighboring republic are beginning to realize that they are ruled by a capitalistic oligarchy. They see in their law courts institutions seemingly designed to uphold the privileges of property against the rights of the people—against justice and human rights. The many shameful decisions of the highest courts in the land, rendered in the interest of property and against the interest of humanity, have done a great deal to cause this awakening. Many instances have occurred in the United States during recent years to impress upon the common people the fact that it is money that counts, both in law and politics—that capital rules, and rules through the judicial as well as the political powers that be.

This awakening in the United States is sure to have a great influence upon conditions in Canada. We cannot be unmindful of happenings among our neighbors, even if conditions in our own country did not forcibly call our attention to these matters. While we have not the enormous centralization of capital in this country that has developed among our neighbors, we have made tremendous progress in the same direction during recent years, and the general symptoms are the same as prevail in the United States. The concentration of capital, fostered as it is by our econ-

omic conditions, which build up and perpetuate privilege, is the menace in our country as in the United States and the great obstacle in the way of good and honest government. We have copied the economic system of our southern neighbors, and we have pretty much the same crop of results. The policy of established privilege is the well known Western railway policy of "an that the traffic will bear." Whether it be landlordism, as in Britain, or commercial capitalistic rule as in America, the people will be compelled to pay the last farthing that privilege has power to extort. The worker will be pressed to the utmost margin of subsistence. With the tools of industry, control of the sources of wealth, and political power as well in the hand of vast capitalistic aggregations, the consumer and the worker alike will be forced to contribute to the breaking point of endurance, that a few may pile up wealth that would have been the envy of autocratic monarchs of the past, while the worker toils for a mere pittance. No great fortune was ever made honestly. Fortunes there are that have been made legally and quite in accord with our laws and customs, but which are built up of vast sums that have never been earned by the one who controls the wealth. If not earned by the owner, then it stands to reason that these fortunes have been taken from those who have earned them. There is only one way to build up a great fortune, and that is to secure a privilege which enables the holder to levy a tax upon his fellows. We might add graft and boodle as auxiliary means of getting wealthy, but there is not

any material difference in all three. The crime of wealth, which enables a fool woman to spend as much on a pet cat or a favorite poodle as would support the family of a workman; which enables a man to squander as much in luxurious vice as would support scores of families of workers, is one of the conditions of modern society which will have to be reckoned with in the future. Why is it that almost every organized community on this continent—municipal, provincial, state or federal, is heavily in debt, notwithstanding the enormous natural wealth which the countries possessed, which the people owned in their forests, mines, lands, etc.? Why, with all this wealth, is it necessary to tax the people heavily, and contract enormous debts besides, in order to carry on the government of the country? Can it not be explained by the fact that enormous private fortunes have been made out of the public domain, while the people are taxed heavily to uphold monopoly and privilege? The public domain, which would have amply provided for all necessary costs of government, has been ruthlessly squandered and used for building up huge private fortunes.

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Old-New Way

To remedy the evils which have been dwelt upon in the preceding chapter, we must go back to first principles of government and re-establish the sovereign rule of the people. In the government of the Plymouth colony, the first British colony in America, we had at the outset pure democracy. The government of the community was in the hands of all the people, who met in open assembly to adopt such laws as the majority thought desirable. Later on, as population increased and the area of territory was extended, it became impractical for the people to meet together to provide for the government of the colony. Recourse was then had to the representative system. Men were chosen by the people to carry on the government of the colony. The Plymouth colonists, however, did not give up full control for a term of years to their elected representatives, as we do now. They were wise enough to retain the sovereign power in their own hands. It was provided that the acts of the elected representatives should remain subject to the approval of the people. Instead of meeting frequently to pass laws and provide for the government of the colony, the people now met only once or twice a year to revise, confirm or reject the acts of their elected representatives. This was still pure democracy. The veto power remained entirely in the hands of the people.

What I want to point out is the fact that the early British colonists in Am-

erica practiced a system of Direct Legislation. They enacted and carried out a system of Direct Legislation which practically embodied the full principle which we now contend for. The colonists evidently realized the truth of the statement made by Patrick Edward Dove, in his "Theory of Human Progress," that "the more power the rulers have the less liberty the people have," and they determined to retain the real power in their own hands. The early British colonists, therefore, believed in and practiced Direct Legislation, which we now advocate. Their application of the system was somewhat different. Their mode of applying the principle would not, of course, be practical for us now, but we have in our ballot system a means of applying Direct Legislation as effectively as the New England colonists had in their open meetings. If the early British colonists had possessed the knowledge which would have enabled them to have retained Direct Legislation as their colonial system developed, a tremendous power for good government would have been established on this continent, which would have prevented the gross political corruption, machine politics, graft and bossism, which later dominated the political life of the great nation which had its inception in this first British colony in America. As it was, with the continued growth of population and expansion of territory, the continuance of this primitive system of Direct Legislation became impractical, and eventually it was dropped entirely. Had the colonists been familiar with the modern system of applying Direct Legislation by means

of the Initiative, the Referendum and the Recall, they would have undoubtedly put it into effect, and they would thus have retained their institutions under the direct control of the people. Not knowing this, this great incentive to good government was lost, with what deplorable result all students of American history know. Direct Legislation, as a safeguard to the representative system of government, would have provided for American political history a record which would have been pleasant reading compared with that which must now prevail.

Buckle, in his "History of Civilization," says "One main condition of the prosperity of a people is, that its rulers shall have very little power, that they shall exercise that power very sparingly, and that they shall by no means presume to raise themselves into supreme judges of the national interests, or deem themselves authorized to defeat the wishes of those for whose benefit alone they occupy the post entrusted to them." Further, Buckle says, "The proper business of the statesman is to contrive the means by which certain ends may be effected, leaving it to the general voice of the country to determine what those ends shall be." According to Buckle, the statesman occupies his post for the purpose of carrying out the will of the people. This is good doctrine for a highly civilized state, but it is not the doctrine that has found favor among politicians in this country. Reliance is placed in the party machine to carry the party along or through any difficulties resulting from abuse of power. Where the party

feeling runs so strongly as it does in this country, it is impossible to call the politicians to account for abuses of power which are of such frequent occurrence in our political life.

### Direct Legislation

Here is where Direct Legislation will come in to remedy the situation. By Direct Legislation we propose to keep our servants the politicians in the position all the time that they are now in only on election day. We propose that the people shall have supreme authority not only one day in about four or five years, as we now have, but every day in the five years and all the time. We propose to apply ordinary business principles in the conduct of our political affairs. This we propose to do by the institution of the system of Direct Legislation, or the Initiative, the Referendum and the Recall.

Fancy the proprietor of a large business engaging several men and saying to them! "Here is my business. I want you to run it for me, for five years. At the end of that time, if I am satisfied with your management, I will give you charge for another term of five years. In the meantime you are complete masters of the situation and can do just as you like. I will bind myself not to interfere until the end of the term." The proprietor then walks out of his office and leaves his delegates in charge. No matter how they mismanage his business, he cannot intervene. If something very pressing comes up which he wants done, he can petition them to do it but he has no authority to command. His



managers need not pay any attention to his petitions. Fancy any sane business man placing himself and his business in such a fool position as this, yet this is exactly what we do with our politicians. This is exactly the position the people of Canada have placed themselves and their country in.

In theory our government is representative, and our representatives are supposed to carry out our wishes, but in practice we know they do nothing of the kind. They are our masters, for the term of their office. Does not the fact that we can only approach them by humble petition prove this? If the people are sovereign, why petition? Is it not a humiliating position for a free and sovereign people to be in, that we can only approach our representatives—that is, the men whom we employ to do our public business—by petition? That no matter how they may disregard our wishes or mismanage our business, we cannot lift a hand to help ourselves, short of rising in unlawful rebellion. I say it should be the right of the people to command, and moreover we should have the power to promptly enforce our commands. Our present system of government has outgrown its usefulness. It is ridiculous to say that, after struggling for centuries for such liberty as we enjoy, we should now cease working for further reform. Conditions are changing. Knowledge is spreading. Science is progressing. New and wonderful inventions are continually appearing. Shall the science of government alone stand still? Shall the march of democracy be stayed?

If the people are sovereign, why is it

that we can approach our rulers only by petition and very often get contemptuously turned down? Witness the situation when some 20,000 electors of the Province of Manitoba petitioned the legislature in favor of a referendum on a proposition to banish the bar rooms. The petitioners did not ask that the Legislature should take the responsibility of abolishing the bars. They simply asked that the question be submitted to a vote of the people. Though this huge petition represented nearly 30 per cent. of the voting power of the province, it was simply treated with silent contempt. It did not even provoke a discussion in the Legislature during the session at which the petition was presented. Could anything show a more utter disregard of the wishes of the people? A request, backed up by a petition of 20,000 names, was not considered of sufficient importance to even receive passing reference in the Legislature. It is true that at a subsequent session of the Legislature a year later, the petition received some belated attention, through a resolution introduced by an opposition member, but it was promptly sat upon by the members of the government, who said, in effect, that the people did not know what was good for them. The facts of the case are simple. The petition did not meet with the approval of the cabinet, or the two or three men who control the cabinet and the majority in the Legislature, hence it was promptly turned down. This incident shows plainly who are the real rulers. Not the people, as it should be, not even the Legislature; but the two or three men who control the

cabinet and dictate to the majority in the Legislature. Thus we have a few men constituting themselves supreme judges, in opposition to the wishes of the people whom they were appointed to serve. How does this conform to the statement of the historian Luckie, that the rulers "should by no means presume to raise themselves into supreme judges of the national interest, or deem themselves authorized to defeat the wishes of those for whose benefit alone they occupy the post entrusted to them."

### **Politicians Ignore the People**

When enormously signed petitions receive no attention from our rulers, is it indeed not time that we should have some means of compelling them to listen to the demands of the people who placed them in office?

Direct Legislation will establish the sovereign rule of the people. It is by all odds the most important political reform movement before the people at the present time. It is the beginning of true democracy. It is the reasonable development toward which British liberty has been working. It is right in line with the evolution of the British system of government. It is the reform which will open the door for all other reforms. It is the reform which will drive scheming, crooked, undesirable men out of politics; which will destroy the power of machine politics and boss rule; which will encourage the people to study political issues, and lead them to vote intelligently on principle, rather than to blindly follow the dic-

tates of party leaders. It is the reform which will check graft and political crookedness, which will abolish the corrupt lobby. The crooked politician who is willing to sell out for a price, will find himself unable to deliver the goods. Corporations that wish to get valuable concessions from Legislatures, will find it useless to spend large sums maintaining a corrupt lobby, and buying up corruptible legislators, because in the end they will have to deal with the people. They can buy up some of the representatives of the people, but the latter cannot deliver the goods when they have the people to reckon with.

Direct Legislation is like a sentinel standing on guard between the corporations and the politicians. Many times over results have shown that powerful and wealthy corporations have more influence with our political rulers than the people have. With Direct Legislation in force the power of the corporations to influence legislation in their own interest and against the interest of the people, would be reduced to a minimum.

### **How It Works In Practice**

An example which will indicate the great value of Direct Legislation occurred in the year 1911 in the municipality of Springfield, in Manitoba. A considerable suburban population is growing up in this municipality on account of its proximity to the city of Winnipeg. The council or the municipality granted a twenty-year, exclusive franchise to a syndicate of private capitalists for the purpose of building electric street railways, establishing light-

ing and heating plants and for other purposes. The municipal rulers were willing to give away this valuable franchise, which included the free use of the streets of the municipality, without compensation of any kind. It was discovered, however, that the by-law must be submitted to a vote of the people before it could become law. The Manitoba Municipal Act provides for a limited use of the Referendum in municipal affairs. When this franchise measure, which had been passed by the rulers of Springfield, came before the people, it was defeated by a vote of nearly thirteen to one. This is simply an example showing how elected rulers may misrepresent the people. If the provision for the submission of by-laws of this nature to the people had not been in effect, the people of Springfield would have been compelled to submit to the action of their council, notwithstanding their overwhelming opposition to the measure. The members of a provincial legislature or of a provincial government are even more liable to act in opposition to the wishes of the people than is a municipal council. The former are elected for longer terms, and are not so closely in touch with their constituents as are the municipal councillors. Direct Legislation is even more urgent in provincial affairs than in municipal.

### **No Recourse But Rebellion**

The case of the Reese franchises, which were before the Manitoba Legislature during the session of 1912, forms a bit of unsavory legislative history of this province. One Reese suddenly ap-

appeared before the Legislature with applications for half a dozen bills, in which he practically asked for blanket franchises covering the entire province, for street railways, lighting, power and other purposes. Reese and his band of promoters had not only the best local legal talent, but they also imported a corporation lawyer from New York to help them get this amazing piece of graft through the Legislature. These franchises would have been worth millions of dollars to the promoters. The promoters had their measures carefully prepared in secret some time beforehand, and there appeared every reason to believe that these measures had been submitted to at least some of the members of the Legislature before they were presented to the House, while the people, who were to have these objectionable franchises fastened upon them, were in blissful ignorance of the schemes which were being quietly worked to defraud them of their property and rights. Apparently a big push was made to get the franchises through the Legislature before the people should become aroused as to their meaning and have time to put in a protest. Several members of the Legislature, including members of the cabinet, showed wonderful solicitude for the privilege hunters, in endeavoring to force the measures through the House. It soon became apparent that the promoters had a clear majority of the members of the House in their favor, and it seemed certain that this big franchise grab would go through. Fortunately the city of Winnipeg has learned from past experience, that it is ne-

cessary to keep a close watch upon the Legislature while that body is in session. The solicitors employed by the city to watch legislation used every means to delay the passage of the bills. Extra legal talent was employed to oppose the granting of the franchises, and many conferences were held between the representatives of the city and the legislative committee. Notwithstanding the vigorous fight put up by the city, it became apparent that the majority in the Legislature were bent on putting the franchise bills through, which practically meant the handing over of the property of the people to a bunch of privilege hunters. The delay resulting from the strong fight put up by the city lawyers against the measures, saved the situation. By this time public opinion had been aroused and monster demonstrations were held to protest against the contemplated action of the Legislature. At one great meeting in Winnipeg it was even proposed to go up to the legislative chamber with ropes and hang the members if they persisted in forcing these franchises through against the wishes of the people. The members of the Legislature now became thoroughly alarmed. The crayfish act was performed and the people triumphed by show of force.

Some lessons may be drawn from this disgraceful situation. In the first place with Direct Legislation in force, it would be impossible to rush measures through before the people would have time to study their import. All laws passed by legislative bodies, unless emergency measures, such as might be necessary in case of an epidemic of

disease, would remain subject to the Referendum for a period of some months before they became law. This delay in itself is a very strong feature in favor of Direct Legislation. Public opinion would have time to crystallize for or against a measure before it could go into effect. Secondly, illegal and hasty action on the part of the people would be discouraged. It is certainly a very bad lesson for a people who wish to be characterized for law and order, to be forced to make violent demonstrations against their rulers, to prevent the passage of objectionable measures. With Direct Legislation in effect, unseemly demonstrations of this nature would be unnecessary, because the people, as the court of final resort, would have the power to veto any undesirable legislation before it became law. Under our present system, once these Reese bills or any other similar measure had passed the Legislature and received the official sanction, all the civil and physical force of the land would be at the command of the franchise holders to enforce the legalized robbery of the people.

Another point growing out of the Reese bills is the right of a legislature to hand over the streets and roads of a municipality to a private corporation. The municipalities should have some rights in matters of this kind, which should not be overruled by a legislative body higher up. While the province has the legal right of jurisdiction over the municipalities, it has not the moral right to hand a municipality over to the tender mercies of a corporation. Franchises are public property. They belong



to the people. The great value of a franchise consists in the fact that it empowers the holder to use land—often public streets and roads—to lay pipes, string wires, lay rails, etc. Secondly, a franchise is often a natural monopoly. These are the two greatest factors (the possession of land and a monopoly) in enabling the possessors of franchises to levy a tax upon the people. What moral right has a Legislature to hand over street rights and franchise rights of a municipality to a corporation?

### **The Initiative. The Referendum**

The Initiative would give the people authority to initiate measures. By the Initiative we would command our legislators to enact a law, instead of humbly petitioning them as we now have to do. We would substitute the manly Initiative, such as would be becoming a free and sovereign people, for the humiliating petition. When so commanded, our legislators would be compelled to act, and the proposed law would be enacted at once or submitted to the people by Referendum. The Initiative would be made imperative on demand of say 8 to 10 per cent. of the voters.

The Referendum simply means that any measure passed by a legislative body, shall be submitted to the people before it becomes law, on demand of a given percentage of the electors, say on petition of 5 per cent. of the electors. No act passed by the Legislature would become law, except emergency measures, until sufficient time had elapsed to enable the people to become acquainted with the proposed law. Then, if no de-

... and a Referendum were made, the law would stop. No bonus, subsidy, grant or franchise to a private corporation could be declared an emergency measure.

This, briefly, is Direct Legislation. The Initiative gives the people the right to initiate legislation. The Referendum gives the right to confirm or veto legislation. It places the veto where it properly belongs—with the people. It makes the people the court of last resort.

### The Recall

The Recall is not necessarily a feature of Direct Legislation in itself, but it is a most valuable and useful complement thereto. Through the Recall the people would have it in their power to at any time dismiss or demand the resignation of any elected representative who failed to carry out their wishes or who proved himself unworthy of their continued confidence. At present we cannot interfere with our representatives, individually or collectively, until the end of their term of office, no matter how unworthy a representative may have proved himself. No matter how polling the position of the people may be, they must put up with a disgraced representative until the end of his term, unless he resigns of his own free will—an unheard of thing in Canadian political life. Under such an unbusiness-like system, it is no wonder that many of our politicians speedily contract what is known as a "big head," shortly after their election. Our present system is just like hiring a man for a term of four or five years, without

any right of discharge, and allowing him to fix his own salary. It is like giving an unlimited power of attorney for a term of years, without power to revoke the same. What business man or farmer would make such a bargain with an employee? Any one who made such a foolish arrangement might expect to be speedily ejected from his own house or business premises. That is about the position the people of this country are in. We employ the politicians to do our business for us, but immediately after their appointment they begin to consider themselves our masters rather than our servants. This is not to be wondered at when we consider the humble and humiliating way we approach them by petition. We should begin to treat our business managers as public servants, and not as despotic rulers. The average man, placed in a public position, is naturally inclined to exceed lawful authority. Appoint a man a policeman and note how important he becomes—how he swells with authority. Let us quote Buckle again, who says: "The love of exercising power has been found so universal that no class of men who have possessed authority have been able to avoid abusing it." This fact recognized, the great need of a reasonable measure of control over our public men becomes apparent and imperative. In a word, the Recall gives the right to discharge the elected representative; but any one so recalled would have the right to offer himself as a candidate for re-election. This gives an opportunity to the recalled person to vindicate his position. A recall is usually voted on on demand of about 20

to 25 per cent. of the electors, and a full majority vote required to make it effective.

With these three—the mighty triumvirate—we have democratic government in earnest. Government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Government, compared with which all other forms of alleged popular government are hollow and unsatisfactory. The primitive man defended himself with the club or stone—the implements which nature had placed within his reach. The Initiative, the Referendum and the Recall are the natural weapons of democracy, by means of which the common people can assert their rights, and enforce their desires.

No cumbersome machinery is necessary to carry Direct Legislation into operation. We now have practically everything needed in our election laws to enforce the reforms demanded, once the principle is recognized and embodied in law. Neither is the principle of Direct Legislation new to the people. It has been before the people in one form or another in British countries for years. Occasionally special questions have been referred to the people for popular vote. At times the politicians have been glad to relieve themselves of the probability of offending some of their friends by referring a question directly to the people, such for instance as referenda on the liquor question. In our municipal government we frequently have referenda on money by-laws. What the advocates of Direct Legislation now demand is, that the principle be fully recognized and reduced to a

workable system, at the demand of the people—not at the option of our politicians.

### Growth of Oligarchy

Under Direct Legislation we would have a government owned by the people, instead of government ownership of the people. We now have government by a political party machine, in the shelter of which hide the vultures of privilege, who are often the real masters of the situation. Too many of our electors, under our party system, are but tools who register the desires of the political bosses. Even the elected representatives of the people have been gradually losing their power under the growth of machine influence. The tendency of late years in this country has been to enormously increase the power of the cabinet, and proportionately to decrease the influence of the private members of legislative bodies. There is now scarcely any individual liberty among the representatives of the people. Individual liberty has been almost completely subjugated to machine influence. The cabinet is supreme and unquestioned. And the cabinet in turn is dominated by one or two or three leaders, so that we have, in the final analysis, rule by two or three men who are, quite likely, under the influence of special privilege. The cabinet is supposed to be responsible, under our system of government, to the elected representatives, who, in turn, are responsible to the people, but any one who has followed the political situation in Canada for a few years, knows that it is the veriest

nonsense to speak of the cabinet as in any sense responsible to the legislative body. The whole thing is a palpable farce. The cabinet is absolutely and completely supreme. There is no freedom or individuality among the private members. They are as completely subservient to the cabinet leaders as if they had been appointed by these leaders. In view of this state of affairs, what is the use of going to the enormous expense of electing and maintaining a large legislative body? We might just as well elect the five or six men who compose our provincial government, or the somewhat larger number who form our federal government and let them do our business, and save the great expense of the legislative body.

Under our party system we cannot even claim that the Legislature is necessary to give the minority a voice. All the opposition members can do is to talk to the galleries. They are not allowed any real voice in legislation. The minority in the country, represented by their elective members in the Legislature or Parliament, are to all intents and purposes disfranchised. All questions are considered and dealt with on a strictly party basis. A small body of independent members could prevent this, but we never have a sufficient number of really independent men in our legislative bodies to enable them to force the consideration of public questions on their merits. A small band of independent men of the right calibre in our Legislatures and Parliaments would have many opportunities of doing the country great service.

Any one who is familiar with the sit-

uation in Manitoba knows that this province has been ruled for years by two or three men almost as effectively as if there had never been a meeting of the Legislature. What is the use of keeping up the farce and the expense? Our Legislature has been neither ornamental nor useful. The cabinet, or the leaders of the cabinet have been supreme and unquestioned. Such is the growth of the political machine in Canada, both in federal and provincial politics.

And where is the place of the people in this political machine? All the power the people have is the privilege once in four or five years of confirming the machine in control for another term, or substituting another machine, which quite possibly may be controlled by the same invisible influence of privilege, for the one they may decide to displace. The people have not the privilege of selecting their own candidates. This is usually done by the machine, or the political bosses. Selection of the candidate is often a more important matter than the election. Without the privilege of selection, the people may be narrowed down to a choice between two machine candidates, neither of whom is desirable. Boss Tweed, the late famous New York municipal boss and grafter, declared that he did not care who elected the officials, so long as he controlled the selection of candidates. Much of the real power lies in the selection, rather than the election of representatives.

The political bosses who control the selection of candidates are the people who really dominate the whole situation. not the people who elect the representa-

tives. On this continent, both in Canada and the United States, negative or reactionary influences have been in the ascendancy for years, and the influence of the people has been growing steadily less. This is most noticeable in the loss of individuality among the private members of the legislative bodies. Independent, high spirited men, become disgusted with politics and leave the field to those who are willing to become subservient to the machine for what there is in it. The remedy for this state of affairs is more democracy—Direct Legislation.

### Direct Legislation in Switzerland

The principle of Direct Legislation, as I have stated, is not a new thing. The application of the principle at the command of the people, or the placing of it in the hands of the people, is a quite modern development. The world is indebted to the little Republic of Switzerland for inaugurating and teaching this great advance in democratic government. Switzerland suffered severely from the evils which accompany representative government. That country, 60 or 70 years ago, was almost completely under the domination of class rule. Oppression gave rise to rioting and even civil war. Political jobbery was rife. Subsidies to railways and other corporations in opposition to the popular will, led the people to believe that it was necessary to exercise close control over their politicians at all times, if the representative system of government was to prove lasting and successful. Leading Swiss reformers advocated the Initia-



tive and Referendum by the means of purifying their political institutions and establishing a government which would be carried on in the interest of the people, rather than in the interest of the politicians and corporations. One by one the provinces or cantons adopted the principle of Direct Legislation. In 1874 the federal government of Switzerland adopted the Referendum, and a few years later put the Initiative also into effect. The result of these steps forward in democracy in Switzerland has been gratifying beyond measure. Switzerland is now admittedly about the best governed country in the world. Students of political and economic conditions have gone from Great Britain and the United States to study the situation in Switzerland, and as a result we now have many books printed in English detailing the wonderful results of Direct Legislation in the little Swiss republic.

Among the enumerated results of the establishment of Direct Legislation in Switzerland are the following: The elimination of illiteracy, through the building up of the best system of education in the world; the complete destruction of the lobby, with its attendant jobbery and corruption. This is accomplished through the Referendum, which gives the people the whip hand over corrupt politicians. Blind partizanship has given place to an intelligent interest in public matters. All public questions are considered on their merit, and not as party questions, to be blindly accepted or rejected according to party leanings. Monopolies have been wiped out. Railways, telegraphs, tele-

phones, express business and other similar utilities have been assumed by the government with complete success. Rates for these services have been reduced from 50 to 75 per cent. below the charges demanded while these utilities were in the hands of private corporations. Taxation has been enormously reduced. The natural resources of the country are husbanded in a way that is a surprise to visitors from most other countries. The efficiency of government has been enormously increased, while the cost has decreased in proportion to the increase in efficiency. "Public business is done promptly and well," says one of the English writers. What a commentary this is on the slipshod way in which public business is transacted in Canada and the United States. With the cheapest postal rates in the world, the Swiss Republic makes a profit on its postal business, simply owing to the general efficiency with which all public business is conducted. All mail and express matter is delivered everywhere throughout the country. In short, Switzerland has a government of the people, for the people, and by the people. Everything runs like clockwork. Jobbery and extravagance are unknown, taxes are low, politics have ceased to be a trade or a species of trickery. The public good is the end sought.

### **As a Safety Valve**

Direct Legislation is a safeguard against centralized wealth and privilege. It is the one sane and sensible weapon by which the common people will be enabled to defend themselves

from the evils that affect them. We cannot depend upon the politicians while our present loose system endures. We have seen the political arm fail us over and over again, when it came to a question of the people as opposed to some wealthy interest. We can still have the services of the skilled politician just as we have now, but we must control them and prevent them from misrepresenting us. We call our system of government a representative system, but it sometimes is one of misrepresentation. It is a good thing to engage a skilled architect when building a house, but no man would think of giving the architect unlimited control of expenditure. He would reserve that to himself. So those who wish to carry on our public business for us must be placed under reasonable restraint and supervision. They must not be our masters. We can now neither command our representatives nor veto their acts. They are simply elective autocrats. The mere fact that we elect our rulers does not necessarily make their administration any the less autocratic during their term of office. Some of the greatest autocrats the world has witnessed were elected, as, for instance, Napoleon. Politics is business—the people's business. Therefore the people should have the final veto and control. Direct Legislation is the essence of self government. It gives the people the power to command, the power to veto, the power to control, first, last and all the time. It is the only system that has ever been devised whereby the people can have control under our representative form of government.

The late Professor Frank Parsons, of Boston University, a leading authority in the United States on municipal and other forms of government, devoted a great deal of time to an investigation of results from Direct Legislation. This he summarizes as follows:

1. Voters exercise greater discrimination when voting on measures than on men. In the latter case many give a straight party vote without regard to fitness for the office.

2. Encourages the voters to study the questions at issue, and makes them more independent.

3. People will not adopt changes without good reason. They are naturally conservative. Hence, they are not likely to pass hasty or experimental legislation.

4. Where a job is suspected, a proposed measure is always vetoed.

5. Causes the automatic disfranchisement of the unfit. Those who cannot or will not study the question at issue do not vote.

6. Political heelers and bosses are eliminated, as they cannot get anything out of a referendum vote. There are no loaves and fishes to divide.

7. The corporations have opposed it, because it stands between them and the politicians.

8. It has destroyed that curse of Parliaments and Legislatures, the lobby.

### **Cannot Buy the People**

There is a saying that every man has his price. I do not believe it. There are honest men in public life. Unfortunately, however, too many who are not honest get into politics. Direct Le-

gislation will not injure the honest men, but it will render the dishonest ones harmless. It will also relieve the weak ones from temptation. It supplies the cash register in the people's big business establishment. The people do not put up jobs on themselves. It is the politicians under the influence of Big Business, who put up the jobs. No less an authority than Professor Bryce, British statesman and author, says that the legislatures can be "got at" and corrupted. But the people cannot be got at. With Direct Legislation established, the people can get at or after the legislature or legislator when they suspect anything wrong. Now they cannot. It is a well known fact that many men get into our parliaments and legislatures as the special representatives of certain Big Interests. These men can also be rendered harmless by Direct Legislation.

Under our party system each party goes to the country with what is called a platform, of principles and proposed measures. The discriminating voter who wishes to give an intelligent vote on these proposed measures, finds that he is in the position of being obliged to accept one or other of these platforms in toto. The probability is that there will be proposals in each of these platforms that he is in favor of, and others that he is opposed to. But he must accept one or other as he stands, or not vote at all. After the election, if the successful party wish to drop any of these planks, as they frequently do, the people have no way of preventing it, though it may be the main plank that won the election that is dropped. Under Direct Legisla-

tion the people would be able to force the successful party to carry out its platform and promises in toto. Not only this, the successful party could also be forced to carry into effect any desirable measures proposed by the opposition or minority party. Platforms, it is notorious, are made to catch votes. At election time the latter idea is considered of vastly greater importance than the mere honest intention of carrying out all promises. Under Direct Legislation, many important issues would go before the people separately, so that the voter would be able to consider each measure by itself, and vote for or against each measure as he saw fit. He would not be obliged to accept the entire platform of any or either party. Thus a great educative influence is created, which would elevate our political conditions. The people would study public questions much more closely, and would soon become much better informed than they now are, instead of merely giving a blind party vote as is so largely done. The people themselves would be elevated in tone and inspiration from the feeling and consciousness that they were in fact the sovereign rulers of the nation.

### **Minority Representation**

Our representative system does not provide for representation of the minority. A minority in Parliament has really no power, though it may represent almost half the voters of the nation. The party in power may even represent only an actual minority of the people. Direct Legislation affords

some relief to the practically disfranchised minority by giving them a direct vote on such important measures as are placed before the people.

Direct Legislation is the key to up-to-date democracy. It would usher in the rule of the people—the beginning of true democracy, as Magna Charta was the beginning of British liberty. It will enable the people to rule all the time, instead of only on election day. The welfare of the state—that is of all the people, is of greater importance than the welfare of any individual or any particular class of individuals. It is our elected representatives who have upheld class rule and fostered privilege and monopoly—who have blocked and defeated reforms, in the interest of classes. Reforms have never come from the ruling class, nor from the aristocracy, elective or otherwise. They have invariably come from the common people, and have only been attained after great agitation and struggle.

We have had the age of stone, of wood, of steam, of iron, of electricity, and now some say we have the gas power age, but we could call it the age of privilege. We must reverse the situation and start in to endeavor to equalize society, rather than to encourage the division of the people into classes. The people must rule in effect as well as in name, that liberty, justice, equality be established in the land. We can now change from one political party to another without doing much harm to privilege. We can only attain really effective results by changing to genuine, up-to-date rule by the people. When this happens, and only then, will

the common people come into their own. When the New England colonists changed from a democracy to an elective aristocracy, self government was fettered and real liberty was lost. We cannot return to the system under which all the people met together to pass the laws, but we can employ experienced men to carry on our business for us, and control them by the modern application of the principle of Direct Legislation, thus recovering the liberty that was lost.

### It Is Coming

I cannot at the moment think of any political proposals which have been received with greater favor among thinking people, in such a short space of time, than has been the case with Direct Legislation. Though it is only about a dozen years since these reform proposals began to attract serious attention on this continent, the principle has already been put into effect in one-third of the states of the American Union, and the question is pending in a more or less acute form in about one-half of the remaining states. Many cities have adopted the principle in municipal government. In the three Prairie Provinces or this country it has been taken up by the people with surprising enthusiasm. Within a few months both political parties in the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan have declared for Direct Legislation. It now seems certain that in each of these provinces, a measure will be adopted providing for this great advance in popular government. In Manitoba Direct Legislation has been made a plank in



the platform of one party, but has been rejected by the leader of the party in power. It remains to be seen if the rank and file of the party will follow this lead. This development in favor of Direct Legislation in the three Prairie Provinces of Western Canada has been practically the growth of the past two years, or since the first Direct Legislation League was organized in Winnipeg about two years ago.

To the city of St. John, New Brunswick, falls the honor of having been the first unit in Canada to adopt this policy. This city has secured a new charter putting the complete program of Direct Legislation—Initiative, Referendum and Recall—into effect. The St. John charter also includes direct primaries. One feature of the movement for Direct Legislation worthy of note is the fact that it has almost everywhere been taken up as a non-party question. It has everywhere attracted the support of the more progressive element in all parties. The only class who need fear it are the political bosses and those who enjoy special privilege of some kind. To these, and these only, is it a menace.

One of the most senseless arguments against Direct Legislation, and one that could only emanate from a narrow intellect, is the statement that it is of foreign origin and therefore should not be adopted by a British country. What it has done for Switzerland it would no doubt do for Canada. I heard a leading Canadian say that Switzerland is 100 years ahead of Canada in the science of government. We have been boasting so much about the wonderful

liberty, freedom, equality, etc., which we enjoy in this country, that we have become over self-satisfied, and while we have been standing still, or actually retrograding under the influence of the growth of the political machine, other nations have been quietly forging away ahead of us. Instead of equality we have privilege—cursed privilege everywhere. Instead of liberty we have rule by political machines, that are in turn under the domination of the great monied interests. These great monied interests are closely allied. Their interests are interwoven in many ways, and they may be depended upon to stand together in self-defence, against the interests of the common people, upon whom they are now enabled to levy taxation for their own private pockets. These great interests, representing vast aggregations of capital, which now have such a powerful influence over our political life, may be depended upon to oppose any such political movement as Direct Legislation, and that is one of the best reasons why the common people should give it their hearty support.

### **Re-organized Society**

The people would make short work of privilege if we could once get them trained into the habit of studying economic and other questions free from party bias. Direct Legislation, by separating important questions from political party issues, will provide the educational influence which will in time lead people to place less reliance upon party leaders and more upon their own judgment. Those who are working so

earnestly for Direct Legislation have ever before them rule by the people as the chief incentive, with the ultimate object of the abolition of privilege and monopoly, and establishing firmly the principle of equal opportunity for all. We do not make any bones about this fact. We do not wish to sail under false colors. The ultimate aim is the sweeping away of every form of privilege and class rule. The removal of every obstacle that stands in the way of social and economic progress. The ruling aristocracy in the past have invariably stood in the way of reforms of all kinds. The political machine, in league with privileged interests, has barred the way to advancement. Decisions have frequently been given by the courts which have greatly hindered progress. Even the church has at times put up a fight against human rights. Direct Legislation, after all, is simply a means to an end. It would place a weapon in the hands of progressive men, which would greatly assist them in educating the people and leading them in the fight against injustice and privilege. It is the hope of democracy, of progress, of equality of opportunity, of the better day to come. When the people arise in their strength and, like Samson of old, shake themselves, the chains of the Philistines of privilege will drop off and there will come into the lives of men a new light.



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